Issues to be discussed with President of Pakistan

551. SHRIVV.RAGHVAN:
SHRI K.M. KHAN:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the areas which are to be covered for discussion between India and Pakistan during the recent visit of President Pervez Musharraf;

(b) the details of the areas of disagreements between the two Nations and India's position thereon; and

(c) to what extent the relations with Pakistan on border issue would be sorted out?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN HE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) India is committed to establishing a relationship of peace, friendship and cooperation with Pakistan. Narrow, •segmented or unifocal approaches to bilateral relationship do not work. The focus must be the totality of the relationship. Both sides must endeavour to build trust and confidence, establish mutually beneficial cooperation even while they address, and move forward on, all outstanding issues including Jammu and Kashmir. At the summit level talks, Prime Minister emphasised the importance of pursuing such an approach. He also referred to specific issues, which would help the peace process forward. These included the issue of 54 POWs believed to be in Pakistani jails, the extradition of known terrorists and criminals who have taken refuge in Pakistan, the need to improve the upkeep of religious shrines and the treatment of pilgrims, and the enhancement of trade ties for mutual benefit. Prime Minister also focussed on cross-border terrorism being promoted in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere in India, and reiterated that India has the resolve, stamina and ability of defeat terrorism.

Pakistan, however, adopts an approach to bilateral relations that is almost exclusively fixated on Kashmir. During the summit level talks, President Pervez Musharraf emphasized the "centrality" of Jammu and Kashmir in India-Pakistan relation and indicated that the process of normalization of India-Pakistan relations would not progress unless the "issue of Kashmir" is resolved to Pakistan's satisfaction. He also discounted the importance of the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration on the grounds that they did not accord sufficient "centraility" to the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan is forcibly and illegally occupying a part of the territory of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of the Indian Union. Under the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, which arc the cornerstones of our bilateral relation, both countries are committed to resolving all outstanding issues peacefully through direct bilateral discussions.

Demarcation at Indo-Bangladesh Border

†552. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH LALAN':
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that matter pertaining to demarcation of border between Bangladesh and India is still controversial;

(b) if so, the areas on the border which arc still controversial;

(c) the action taken by Government so far to solve this controversy; and

(d) by when, this controversy would be solved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (d) Joint demarcation of about 6.5 km of the India — Bangladesh land boundary in Tripura, West Bengal and Assam is yet to be completed. There are also outstanding matters relating to exchange of enclaves and adverse possessions. The Government of India is keen on an early settlement of all boundary-related matters with Bangladesh in accordance with the terms of the India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement of 1974.

The two Governments have agreed to constitute Joint Boundary Working Groups to address all pending matters.

The first meeting of the India — Bangladesh Joint Boundary Working Groups on Border Demarcation, and on Enclaves and Adversely Possessed Territories was held in Dhaka from July 2-4, 2001. Both sides presented their respective positions on these matters in order to facilitate a clear understanding of each others points of view and to address the issues in a pragmatic and time-bound manner.

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.